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REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE STRENGTHENING OF INTERNATIONAL SECURITY

SECURITY COUNCIL
Forty-seventh year

Letter dated 26 May 1992 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Yugoslavia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit, enclosed herewith, the letter of the Vice-President of the Presidency of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Dr. Branko Kostić, addressed to you (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as the official document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 68, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Dragomir DJOKIĆ
Ambassador
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

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ANNEX

Letter dated 25 May 1992 from the Vice-President of the Presidency of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia addressed to the Secretary-General

The Presidency and Government of Yugoslavia have closely reviewed the contents of your report of 21 May 1992 regarding the deployment of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) in the areas under United Nations protection, the contents of the demarche of the President of the Security Council of 21 May 1992, as well as the text of Security Council resolution 752 of 15 May 1992.

The Presidency and Government of Yugoslavia fully appreciate the justified concern of the United Nations over the Yugoslav crisis and the efforts to overcome it. We have repeatedly underlined and we wish to do so once again, that the involvement of the United Nations could be the most effective factor in bringing about a peaceful, just and durable solution to the outstanding problems.

In that connection, we wish to express the sincere readiness of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to cooperate with the United Nations with a view to making its efforts fully effective.

However, we have to note the immense disappointment and indignation of the Presidency, the Government and the citizens of Yugoslavia at finding ourselves accused, without any cause or valid reason, and despite our persistent endeavours to bring about a peaceful settlement to the Yugoslav crisis and particularly to the conflicts in Bosnia and Herzegovina, of committing aggression against that Republic, without any arguments being offered to back up such accusations.

Allow me to recall a few basic facts.

First, Yugoslavia has on every occasion, including the Conference on Yugoslavia, in the United Nations and in bilateral meetings, persistently warned of the danger of an internecine war breaking out in the event of any hasty decisions on the future of Bosnia and Herzegovina prior to a political settlement having been negotiated among the three constituent nations of that Republic.

Those warnings went unheeded. An internecine war has broken out, taking a vast toll in human lives, and it should be stopped as soon as possible. However, the responsibility for that war is being shifted from those who have provoked it and is being planted instead, without any justification, on Serbia and Montenegro.

Secondly, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia has demonstrated a maximum degree of tolerance with respect to the premature decisions on the international recognition of Bosnia and Herzegovina. A special declaration was issued by the Assembly of Yugoslavia stating that this country had no territorial claims on its neighbours and therefore none on that Republic either, and that it would not stand in the way of the breakaway Yugoslav republics being integrated in international legal institutions. The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia is consistently abiding by those positions.

Thirdly, the Presidency of Yugoslavia decided on the day of the promulgation of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, that is on 27 April 1992, that it would reduce the Army of Yugoslavia to the territory and citizens of Yugoslavia. As a result, all the citizens of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia who had been in the YPA (Yugoslav People's Army) troops in that Republic were withdrawn by 19 May 1992, together with their share of equipment and armaments. All that remained were three blocked barracks of military cadets with some 1,500 boys under 17 years of age in them whose withdrawal was rendered impossible by paramilitary Moslem organizations. Efforts to withdraw, with the help of special teams, a part of the remaining heavy weaponry were prevented by paramilitary Moslem and Croat units, which massacred the members of the teams appointed by the army to perform this task in the towns of Tuzla and Sarajevo.

The Presidency of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the military authorities of Yugoslavia no longer have any jurisdiction in Bosnia and Herzegovina nor are they taking any decisions that could affect the conflict in that Republic, apart from the fact that they wish to assist any peace-making or humanitarian action.

Fourthly, in addition to paramilitary units composed of Moslem, Serb and Croat people living in Bosnia and Herzegovina, there are about 30,000 regular Croatian troops in that Republic, or a total or over 150,000 men in arms. Surely it is self-evident that more than 60,000 Moslems and 40,000 Croats have been armed with the help of Croatia and those external forces that are adding fuel to the flames of internecine conflicts, while the Yugoslav People's Army was the only legal armed force present there. None the less, it was the one that was the object of the worst political accusations. Now that it has withdrawn from the region, not only is a blind eye being turned to the fact that the war is being waged among the three ethnic groups, but Yugoslavia and its army, which is no longer engaged there, are continuing to be blamed without any reason.

Fifthly, Yugoslavia has repeatedly stressed that the only way to deal with the crisis and conflicts in Bosnia and Herzegovina is via political negotiations and a political consensus among the representatives of the three constituent nations of that Republic. We fully support the Lisbon negotiations under the auspices of the European Community and chaired by Ambassador Cutilheiro, and it is our view that the United Nations should focus its attention on those negotiations as the only feasible and realistic road towards an end to the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The option of sanctions against Yugoslavia on the basis of unsubstantiated claims of aggression is deeply unfair and wrong. History knows of no case of a country threatening another without using the army. As of 19 May this year, not a single soldier who is a citizen of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia remains in that Republic, and the borders with Bosnia and Herzegovina have been closed for 30 days now for any crossings by armed individuals or groups who might try to make them.

History knows of no case, either, or the citizens of a country that has been the subject of aggression fleeing to the country committing the aggression. We are referring to the numerous Moslem refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina who are seeking shelter in the territory of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

Sanctions taken against Yugoslavia can most certainly inflict a great deal of harm, materially and politically, to our country and our citizens, but they are certainly not the way to deal with the tragedy of the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina. On the contrary, they could spark off very serious problems for the citizens of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, without any reason or justification.

It is our firm conviction that the key to the solution to the crisis in Bosnia and Herzegovina must be sought in Sarajevo, not in Belgrade. The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, and the republics of Serbia and Montenegro, will wholeheartedly support any action conducive to a settlement of the crisis.

I quite understand the concern you expressed in stating that the mission entrusted to UNPROFOR has already been put on trial, at a stage when more than 10,500 of its members are deployed in these territories. You concluded your statement by saying that the progress and success of the whole operation depended on agreement and active cooperation with UNPROFOR. In that regard, let me assure you that our side, including Yugoslavia's army, shall continue to honour the obligations it has assumed by accepting the Plan and to cooperate in every way with UNPROFOR headquarters and units.

With regard to the takeover of responsibility by UNPROFOR in sector East and the breaches of cease-fire, I believe that UNPROFOR commanders report to you regularly regarding the daily breaches of cease-fire, that is, the non-compliance with the agreement by the Croatian Armed Forces and the Republic of Croatia.

YPA units have almost fully withdrawn from United Nations Protected Areas (UNPAs) in Eastern Slavonia. They are ready to withdraw completely and in the shortest possible time, provided that UNPROFOR ensures that Croatian forces will not breach the cease-fire or make any advance movements.

With regard to the takeover of responsibility by UNPROFOR in sectors North and South, we have received reliable information that the harmonization of arrangements is being finalized, based on the agreement previously reached

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at the negotiations between the representatives of the authorities of Krajina and the representatives of UNPROFOR and the European Community. According to that information, the negotiated arrangements would be satisfactory to the local authorities, as well as to UNPROFOR and Croatia. The plan is to deploy military, police and civilian observers of the United Nations and the European Community in territories with a majority Serbian population that are outside UNPAs. The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia hopes that this arrangement will also be satisfactory to Croatia, as indicated in paragraph 23 of the report of the Secretary-General. The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and YPA hereby express once again their resolve to honour all the obligations that YPA has assumed regarding the deployment of UNPROFOR and to enable them to be realized in full, including accommodation, food, etc.

As for the breaches of cease-fire, the Presidency has been informed by YPA and the local authorities in the zones concerned that such breaches were invariably made by the Croatian side, while YPA units or local forces retaliated only in the most serious instances. The authorities of Krajina are ready to guarantee that fire will never be opened from their side if the Croatian side complies with the agreement. They propose that United Nations and European Community observers be deployed in those areas under the arrangement which is being negotiated.

Instances of forced expulsion of the non-Serbian population in sector East have been reported to us by General Nambiar and Mr. Thornberry. Mr. Goulding was assured, on his latest visit, on 7 May 1992, of our resolve not to allow any forced displacements, regardless of nationality. In each specific instance, we have ordered meticulous investigation and energetic reaction by the responsible authorities to correct possible injustices and prevent new incidents.

The Presidency has received serious assurances from the local authorities that complete security and unhindered return shall be guaranteed to the entire population, without any discrimination on grounds of nationality, and that additional measures shall be taken to prevent any forced displacement of population. The issue is being investigated in detail and with all due attention, and a more substantial report shall be available presently, to UNPROFOR headquarters as well. There are indications that some non-Serbian populations moved out without being forced to do so, which instances have been misrepresented in order to compromise the local authorities.

Yugoslavia is very anxious to see a peaceful and lasting political solution found to the crisis in Bosnia and Herzegovina as soon as possible. Yugoslavia hereby declares that, as a Member of the United Nations, it shall participate with maximum commitment in United Nations activities and decisions and act in concert with them, but in keeping with the fact that Bosnia and Herzegovina is not a part of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia is ready and willing to do its utmost to help unhindered engagement of the United Nations and international humanitarian organizations in Bosnia and Herzegovina. To this end, it is

ready to enable humanitarian aid to be transported across its territory to Bosnia and Herzegovina, and especially Sarajevo. Allow me to inform you that we have already used and shall continue to use our influence in the most constructive way, including public appeals, to have the embattled parties in Bosnia and Herzegovina do the same on the territory of that Republic.

We appreciate the extreme importance of unblocking the airport in Sarajevo. We shall publicly appeal to all those involved in its blockade to lift the blockade of the airport immediately and without fail in order to enable the delivery of humanitarian aid and allow UNPROFOR to take over control of the airport and the delivery of such aid.

The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia shall make a public appeal to all the embattled parties to immediately terminate the bombing of Sarajevo and Mostar and the destruction of other cities and historical monuments.

The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia shall publicly dissociate itself from all unacceptable acts committed by paramilitary formations in Bosnia and Herzegovina, including formations of the Serbian population, and appeal for the cease-fire to be observed in favour of a patient search for a political solution.

Furthermore, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia shall call upon the Serbian population in Bosnia and Herzegovina to give maximum cooperation to representatives of the United Nations, the International Red Cross, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and representatives of other international institutions in the field.

In conclusion, allow me to express my belief that an urgent visit by representatives of the members of the Security Council to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and to Bosnia and Herzegovina would help a great deal in providing a more complete and objective picture of the real situation and in avoiding judgements based on assumptions, rather than established facts.

Reiterating our readiness to fully cooperate with the United Nations, particularly in the implementation of decisions taken by the Security Council, I would like to underscore once again the full commitment of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to the objectives and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe and a peaceful settlement of the Yugoslav crisis within the framework of the Conference on Yugoslavia, as well as the Conference on Bosnia and Herzegovina.

All the stances and commitments stated above have also been fully agreed with the leaderships of Serbia and Montenegro.

(Signed) Branko KOSTIĆ
Vice-President of the Presidency